

Pro-Palestine solidarity blocks Israeli ship

By Judy Greenspan
Oakland, Calif.

June 6 — For the seventh year in a row, Israeli-owned ships have not been allowed to unload in the Port of Oakland. On June 4, thousands of supporters of the Palestinian struggle conducted six simultaneous picket lines during two work shifts to “Block the Boat.” Members of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 10 honored the picket lines, refusing to work the ship.

In a tremendous victory of worker and community solidarity, the Israeli ZIM-operated ship was forced to leave the port at 6 p.m. — with all of its cargo still on board.

The day of action began when hundreds of demonstrators assembled at 5:00 a.m. to prevent workers from entering the berth where the Israeli-owned ZIM ship had docked. Picketers fanned out to six entrances used by the dock workers.

Members of ILWU Local 10 and other union members stood around in groups, refusing to cross the picket line and talking to protesters. Truckers driving through the Port of Oakland sounded their horns in solidarity with the protest.

The Israeli ship actually left the harbor



‘Block the Boat’ action at Port of Oakland, June 4.

WW PHOTO: JUDY GREENSPAN

before the official start of the second shift in the evening — a strong measure of the success and strength of the Block the Boat action.

The solidarity action was organized by the Arab Resource and Organizing Center and supported by many progressive groups in the Bay Area. According to AROC, the blockade of the boat was in direct response to an international call sent out by Palestinian labor unions

asking workers around the world to support Palestine by refusing to handle any Israeli goods or cargo.

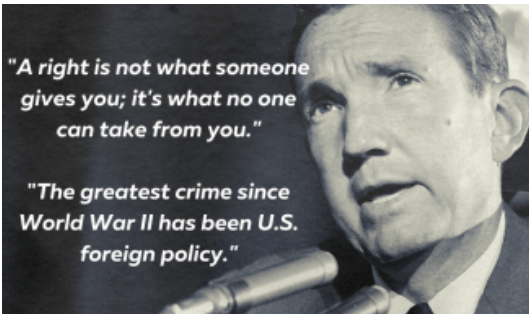
In a June 6 statement issued by AROC, Elias Al-Jelda of the Executive Committee of the Palestine General Federation of Trade Unions in Gaza stated: “It warms our hearts in the besieged occupied Gaza Strip and the rest of occupied Palestine that our comrades led by AROC, and with the solidarity of our fellow workers

in ILWU Local 10, achieved this great #BlockTheBoat victory against ZIM in Oakland. We call upon all dockworkers worldwide to intensify the boycott campaign against ZIM ships and all business profiting from apartheid.”

In the statement, President of ILWU Local 10 Trent Willis emphasized: “Workers’ struggle is worldwide. ... When the workers of the world figure that out and realize that we have to band together to make change, then it’ll be a better world, including for the Palestinian people. Worker power, economic power, is real power — it’s more powerful than those bombs Israel is dropping.”

The Oakland Block the Boat protest was part of an international week of actions to prevent the docking and unloading of any ship carrying Israeli goods or owned by Israel. According to the AROC statement, “Oakland and the broader Bay Area have once again achieved a historic Boycott, Divest and Sanctions Movement (BDS) victory for Palestine.”

On the East Coast hundreds of people from the #BlockTheBoat coalition held a first-ever pro-Palestine action June 6 at the Port of New York and New Jersey, against a ZIM ship docking in Elizabeth, N.J. □



June 13
Honoring
Ramsey
Clark 3

Puerto Rican unions: ‘No LUMA!’ 3

Economic recovery? 3

On the picket line 4



WW GRAPHIC: MIRINDA CRISSMAN

Trans youth targeted 5
Cops out of Pride 11

TEAR DOWN
THE WALLS

Arizona: Nazi death-camp gas

‘Smart’ communication for profit

Solitary torture chambers

Mumia on abolition

Shaka Sankofa’s last words

6-7

Editorial Are pro athletes
exploited workers? 10

Disability solidarity
with Naomi Osaka 10

Support a Marxist voice for LGBTQ2S+ rights

For over half a century, Workers World newspaper has covered the global struggle to end all forms of discrimination, persecution and violence against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and gender-nonconforming communities.

WW has consistently backed up our activist coverage with analysis. In the early 1970s, WW ran a series of articles that led to publication of “The Gay Question: A Marxist Appraisal” in 1976. Then in 1993, WW published “The Roots of Lesbian and Gay Oppression: A Marxist View,” with the first book’s original text and a new preface and afterword. (Read it at workers.org/books.)

In 2004 WW managing editor and globally recognized transgender leader Leslie Feinberg began the “Lavender & Red” series, which ran until 2008 in WW. A group of 25 articles from that series was later published as the book, “Rainbow Solidarity in Defense of Cuba.” In 2012 Feinberg performed civil disobedience and wrote articles defending Black trans woman CeCe McDonald, who was charged with manslaughter after defending herself from a racist, bigoted attack.

WW helps to build mass struggles, like what’s been going on in the streets from coast to coast. This righteous outpouring of rage and protest over the racist cop murder of George Floyd came as the COVID-19 pandemic disproportionately impacted Black, Latinx and Indigenous peoples and immigrants.

Please help us get out the word. Join the Workers World Supporter Program. For a

donation of at least \$75 a year — or \$100, or \$300 or more if you can — receive a year’s subscription to WW; a regular letter about timely issues; and one, two or three subscriptions, respectively, to give to friends. Members can receive a copy of the book: “What Road to Socialism?” upon request. (Or read it at workers.org/books)

New articles are posted daily at workers.org. Currently, one issue a month is being printed and mailed to subscribers. As soon as it’s possible, the newspaper will resume more frequent printing and mailing.

Write monthly or annual checks to Workers World and mail them, with your name and address, to Workers World, 147 W. 24th St., 2nd Floor, New York, NY 10011. Or sign up at workers.org to donate each month.

We’re grateful for your help in building Workers World! □



Pride, New York City, 2019.

WW PHOTO: BRENDA RYAN



Workers World Party is a revolutionary Marxist-Leninist party inside the belly of the imperialist beast. We are a multinational, multigenerational and multigendered organization that not only aims to abolish capitalism, but to build a socialist society because it’s the only way forward!

Capitalism and imperialism threaten the peoples of the world and the planet itself in the neverending quest for ever-greater profits.

Capitalism means war and austerity, racism and repression, attacks on im/migrants, misogyny, LGBTQ2S+ oppression and mistreatment of people with disabilities. It means joblessness, increasing homelessness and impoverishment and lack of hope for the future. No social problems can be solved under capitalism.

The U.S. is the richest country in the world, yet no one has a guaranteed right to shelter, food, water, health care, education or anything else — unless they can pay for it. Wages are lower than ever, and youth are saddled with seemingly insurmountable student debt, if they even make it to college. Black, Brown and Indigenous youth

Join us in the fight for socialism!

and trans people are gunned down by cops and bigots on a regular basis.

The ruthless ruling class today seeks to wipe out decades of gains and benefits won by hard-fought struggles by people’s movements. The super-rich and their political representatives have intensified their attacks on the multinational, multigender and multigenerational working class. It is time to point the blame at — and challenge — the capitalist system.

WWP fights for socialism because the working class produces all wealth in society, and this wealth should remain in their hands, not be stolen in the form of capitalist profits. The wealth workers create should be socially owned and its distribution planned to satisfy and guarantee basic human needs.

Since 1959, Workers World Party has been out in the streets defending the workers and oppressed here and worldwide. If you’re interested in Marxism, socialism and fighting for a socialist future, please contact a WWP branch near you. □



In the U.S.

Pro-Palestine solidarity blocks Israeli ship.	1
Honoring Ramsey Clark	3
Shambling recovery – COVID economic crisis. . . .	3
On the picket line.	4
Trans youth attacked by legislative hate bills. . . .	5
Arizona: Nazi death-camp gas in executions	6
Smart Communications – prison profiteer.	6
Solitary confinement ‘torture chambers’.	6
The ‘new abolitionists’.	7
Last words of Shaka Sankofa	7
A disability rights statement for Naomi Osaka. . .	10
Seattle: Cops out of Pride!	11

Around the world

Puerto Rico: ‘No peace’ if energy privatized	3
Anti-imperialist defense of Syria	8
The fight to win Alex Saab’s freedom.	9
In Palestine, police – and resistance	11

Editorial

Are pro athletes exploited workers?	10
---	----

Noticias en Español

La cultura de la intoxicación.	12
Proyecto 1619: Educadores progresistas	12

Workers World
147 W. 24th St., 2nd Fl.
New York, NY 10011
Phone: 212.627.2994
E-mail: ww@workers.org
Web: www.workers.org



Vol. 63, No. 23 • June 10, 2021
Closing date: June 9, 2021

Editors: John Catalinotto, Martha Grevatt, Deirdre Griswold, Monica Moorehead, Betsey Piette, Minnie Bruce Pratt

Web Editors: ABear, Harvey Markowitz, Janet Mayes

Prisoners Page Editors: Mirinda Crissman, Ted Kelly

Production & Design Editors: Gery Armsby, Mirinda Crissman, Ted Kelly, Sasha Mazumder, Scott Williams

Copyediting and Proofreading: Paddy Colligan, S. Hedgecoke

Contributing Editors: LeiLani Dowell, G. Dunkel, K. Durkin, Sara Flounders, Teresa Gutierrez, Joshua Hanks, Makasi Motema, Gloria Rubac

Mundo Obrero: Teresa Gutierrez, Carlos Vargas

Copyright © 2021 Workers World. Verbatim copying and distribution of articles is permitted in any medium without royalty provided this notice is preserved.

Workers World (ISSN-1070-4205) is published monthly by WW Publishers, 147 W. 24th St. 2nd Fl., New York, NY 10011. Phone: 212.627.2994. Subscriptions: One year: \$36; institutions: \$50. Letters to the editor may be condensed and edited. Articles can be freely reprinted, with credit to Workers World, 147 W. 24th St. 2nd Fl., New York, NY 10011. Back issues and individual articles are available on microfilm and/or photocopy from NA Publishing, Inc, P.O. Box 998, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-0998. A searchable archive is available on the Web at www.workers.org.

A headline digest is available via e-mail subscription. Subscription information is at workers.org.

Periodicals postage paid at New York, N.Y.
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Workers World, 147 W. 24th St. 2nd Fl. New York, N.Y. 10011.

If you are interested in joining Workers World Party contact: 212.627.2994

National Office
147 W. 24th St., 2nd floor
New York, NY 10011
212.627.2994
wwp@workers.org

Atlanta
PO Box 18123
Atlanta, GA 30316
404.627.0185
atlanta@workers.org

Austin
austin@workers.org

Bay Area
P.O. Box 22947
Oakland, CA 94609
510.394.2207
bayarea@workers.org

Boston
284 Amory St.
Boston, MA 02130
617.522.6626
boston@workers.org

Buffalo, N.Y.
335 Richmond Ave.
Buffalo, NY 14222
716.883.2534
buffalo@workers.org

Central Gulf Coast
(Alabama, Florida, Mississippi)
centralgulfcoast@workers.org

Cleveland
cleveland@workers.org

Durham, N.C.
804 Old Fayetteville St.
Durham, NC 27701
919.322.9 970
durham@workers.org

Houston
P.O. Box 3454
Houston, TX 77253-3454
713.503.2633
houston@workers.org

Philadelphia
P.O. Box 34249
Philadelphia, PA 19101
610.931.2615
phila@workers.org

Portland, Ore.
portland@workers.org

Salt Lake City
801.750.0248
slc@workers.org

San Antonio
sanantonio@workers.org

West Virginia
WestVirginia@workers.org

June 13 memorial Honoring Ramsey Clark

By Monica Moorehead

Representatives from Cuba, Venezuela, Nicaragua, Palestine, the Philippines, Malaysia, Serbia, Syria and more will be paying tribute June 13 to Ramsey Clark, a beloved and respected antiwar humanitarian. Clark, a former U.S. attorney general under the Lyndon Johnson administration from 1967 to 1969, died April 9 after a long illness at the age of 93.

The two-hour tribute will be a virtual memorial featuring hundreds of viewers from around the world, honoring Clark who became a fierce, defiant opponent to U.S. foreign policy, especially in the area of wars of aggression and occupation including sanctions.

The son of the U.S. Supreme Court Justice Tom Clark, Ramsey Clark was one of the main contributors to the 1965 Voting Rights Act and other historic Civil

Rights legislation, as an assistant U.S. attorney general.

As the June 13 invitation states: “Ramsey Clark founded the International Action Center in 1992 to oppose U.S. wars of aggression and occupation, defend liberation struggles and defend political prisoners. In addition to supporting the wave of resistance then sweeping Latin America, IAC militants joined Ramsey Clark’s international delegations that stood in solidarity with Palestine in besieged Gaza, that defied the blockade of Cuba, the war and sanctions on Iraq, the U.S.-NATO war on Yugoslavia and the kidnapping of then President Aristide in Haiti.”

This solidarity came in various forms like people’s tribunals and commissions, rallies, humanitarian trips bringing aid like medicines, foods and other supplies to sanctioned countries, and legally defending leaders of other countries, who were falsely



accused of crimes by international courts doing the bidding of U.S. imperialism. His visits to war-torn areas like the former Yugoslavia, Vietnam, Iraq, Gaza and Sudan did not deter Clark from risking his life to accomplish missions of solidarity.

Clark became the legal counsel for U.S. political prisoners Leonard Peltier, Iman Jalil Al-Amin (aka H. Rap Brown) and the late civil rights attorney, Lynne Stewart.

The fact that Clark was so hated by the

ruling elite, into which he was born, is a testament to his willingness to be front and center in showing his disdain for a government he was once a part of, but eventually turned his back on, to consciously side with the most oppressed.

To register for the June 13 tribute, go to bit.ly/RamseyClark, and to read and view condolence messages, go to iacenter.org/RamseyClarkTribute.

Puerto Rican workers No peace if energy is privatized

On June 1, the Financial Oversight and Management Board overseeing Puerto Rico’s economy privatized the island’s public power utilities by signing a \$1.3 billion contract with private consortium LUMA Energy. The contract, in effect for the next 15 years, could increase electric rates by 10 cents per kilowatt hour or more.

LUMA customers are already encountering new fees and significantly higher bills than formerly paid to the public Puerto Rican Electric Power Authority. Thousands of PREPA workers have lost their jobs. The privatization has fueled demonstrations including encampments and picket lines at plant gates. Further actions could lead to mass protests similar to those in summer 2019 that forced former Governor Pedro Rosselló to resign.

The following is a statement from unions representing thousands of Puerto Rican workers, ranging from teachers to truck drivers, in support of PREPA workers and demanding the LUMA contract be repealed.

Union organizations today warned Governor Pedro Pierluisi and the Financial Oversight and Management Board that they will paralyze the country if the LUMA Energy contract — that increases rates, allows the consortium to leave Puerto Rico if a hurricane strikes and displaces thousands of workers — is not canceled.

“We are warning the attorney for the Financial Oversight and Management Board, Gov. Pedro Pierluisi, that there will be no peace in Puerto Rico if the contract is not repealed and they listen to the people who demand, not only a public and more efficient PREPA, but also one free of fossil fuels. Right now there is a favorable atmosphere for paralyzing the country, and if the governor continues to be deaf to the people, we will do so. We have already held several meetings to coordinate logistics and dates, and this week we will meet again to finalize details. Make no mistake, this summer will be one very similar to that of 2019,” said Carlos Rodríguez, coordinator of the Frente Amplio de Camioneros (Broad Front of Truckers).

“Today, we tell LUMA not to bother settling in our country, since we will not leave them alone until they leave Puerto Rico. And the workers who they intend to bring in from abroad should know that if they cross the picket line, they will face a people willing to defend their energy sovereignty and their access to water. There is no life without water and electricity! In the next few days we will not only be in front of the gates together with our comrades in struggle to prevent the entry of the LUMA parasites, but we will continue calling for activities that will lead to a National Strike if the intransigent Pierluisi does not stop the contract. The ball is in their court,” stressed María del Mar Rosa, organizational coordinator for Asociación Puertorriqueña de Profesores Universitarios (Puerto Rican Association of University Professors).

The spokespersons insisted that the governor wants to deprive the people of the island of its main resource for economic development, the Puerto Rican Electric Power Authority, by giving it up to LUMA Energy for nothing and without any guarantee for the country, and

they will not allow it.

“We are not going to allow our main industry to be taken from us, and even more so, knowing that the people will be the ones who will pay the consequences. To this must also be added the humiliating and abusive way in which they have treated the workers of the corporation, stripping them of their positions and rights and even the possibility of attending to the service needs of citizens. In the same way, we express our total and unconditional solidarity to the Alliance of Active Employees and Retirees, who have been bulldozed, abused, humiliated and belittled by the government of Pedro Pierluisi and the dictatorship that governs the country,” he added.

The group reiterated its support and solidarity with the PREPA employees who have been transferred, to whom they advised to keep their calm.

‘Remove all the vultures that invade our country’

“This will be something temporary — we have lived through very difficult times, but we have also shown that the struggle of the people of Puerto Rico is our most effective tool; if the people removed a governor, they may have the will to remove all the vultures that invade our country. We reiterate our support, solidarity and the commitment to make sure that LUMA’s days are numbered,” stated Antonio Cabán, president of the Federación Central de Trabajadores (Central Federation of Workers), United Food and Commercial Workers, Local 481.

Union leaders maintained that they will fight alongside the Active Employees Alliance and the people to oust LUMA Energy from the country.

“The so-called rulers should have no doubt that they will have an effective response from the working people. We are not sitting by, nor are we going to do so. You, arbitrarily, have closed the doors to dialogue; you have closed the doors to the search for equitable solutions in the courts of justice; you have legislated to undermine our rights; you have done everything you can to



PHOTO: ALEJANDRO GRANADILLO

In San Juan, Puerto Rico, a person waves a ‘LUMA out!’ flag to protest the privatization of public power utilities under LUMA Energy, June 1.

guarantee their domination. Now, face the consequences. You drew the line. We know how to cross it,” said Lizbeth Mercado, president of the Unión de Empleados de la Corporación del Fondo del Seguro del Estado (Union of the State Insurance Fund Corporation).

Signing organizations: Unión General de Trabajadores (UGT), UNETE (sindicato de maestros), Central Puertorriqueña de Trabajadores, Movimiento Solidario Sindical, Federación Central de Trabajadores/UFCW Local 481, Prosol-UTIER (Unión de Trabajadores de la Industria Eléctrica y Riego), Asociación Puertorriqueña de Profesores Universitarios (APPU), Sindicato Puertorriqueño de Trabajadores y Trabajadoras, EDUCAMOS, Frente Amplio de Camioneros, Hermandad de Empleados Exentos no Docentes (HEEND), Federación Puertorriqueña de Trabajadores, Unión Independiente de Abogados y Abogadas de la Sociedad para la Asistencia Legal (UIASAL), Unión Independiente de Trabajadores del Aeropuerto (UITA), Unión de Empleados de la Corporación del Fondo del Seguro del Estado (UASAL), Unión de Abogados y Abogadas de Servicios Legales (UAASL), United Steel Workers-PR, Hermandad de Empleados de Oficina Autoridad Metropolitana de Autobuses (HEOAMA). □

Shambling recovery from the COVID economic crisis

By G. Dunkel

President Joe Biden interrupted a long weekend at the Delaware shore to claim credit for the 559,000 new jobs which the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported the economy added in May. He admitted to some bumps in the process, but said: “In short, this is progress — historic progress — progress that’s pulling our economy out of the worst crisis it’s been in, in 100 years.”

Some of the “bumps” are major. He admitted that 18 million people in the United States still have to confront hunger, even though the big business press no longer has

shown images of long lines at food banks and pantries.

Biden extolled the “recovery” benefits of \$1,400 that went to 167 million people, which propped up their purchasing power and let them pay for “food, rent, utilities, car payments, student loans and health care expenses.” But he didn’t raise the eviction threats hanging over the heads of millions of families.

The president pointed out that the “boost in unemployment benefits” provided by the federal government — \$300 a week over and above state unemployment — was ending in 90 days.

Continued on page 4

On the picket line

WHEN WE FIGHT WE WIN!

By Marie Kelly

Gig workers are essential workers

As pandemic business closures escalated in 2019-2020, many immigrant workers who lost jobs at hotels and construction sites turned to the gig economy for work with Lyft, Uber, DoorDash, GrubHub and Instacart. Labeled as independent contractors by the companies, these workers have few labor protections. Mainstream media and corporate heads hailed them as essential heroes during the pandemic lockdown — while the workers themselves are treated poorly.

What is it like to rely on this type of job to earn a living? Conditions are bleak. The hours are long, and the pay is low. Safety is a real concern. Drivers have been robbed; those on bikes have had them stolen. Francisco Villalva, a 29-year-old delivery cyclist, was killed in March during an attempted robbery in New York City.

Drivers depend on tips to supplement the minimum wage they receive. But restaurants commonly steal the tips to apply to app service charges. Workers are frequently paid only when out on a delivery, even though they may spend hours on a company’s app searching for a gig.

Workers are fighting these enormously profitable companies for status as employees — with the right to receive adequate compensation, sick time and workmen’s compensation and the right to form a union. Like Amazon workers, gig drivers are organizing for basic measures around human dignity. There are close to 5,000 restaurants serviced by DoorDash, and fewer than 200 allow delivery drivers to use their bathrooms. Workers report urinating in bottles or on the street, because they are denied access to these bathrooms.

Gig workers are connecting through social media to share experiences and take up grassroots organizing.

Groups like Los Deliveristas Unidos and El Diario de los Deliveryboys en la Gran Manzano (Deliveryboys in the Big Apple) are working with the Brooklyn-based Worker’s Justice Project/Proyecto Justicia Laboral (WJP). Mexican and Guatemalan gig workers are reaching out to workers from West Africa.

However, gig workers in New York City should be wary of draft state legislation, backed by the New York State AFL-CIO, that would organize food delivery drivers and rideshare drivers into two pre-selected, massive unions. (Labor Notes, May 21) No vote by rank-and-file members would occur, and the designated unions would deal directly with the company with no input from members. State law could wipe out local victories that have won minimum pay laws. Workers labeled “contractors” would not gain employee status.

A setback in state law happened in California in 2020. Uber, Lyft, DoorDash and Instacart spent hundreds of millions of dollars in a successful campaign to enact Prop. 22. The measure denies gig workers the right to organize and refuses to recognize them as company employees. These workers are the backbone of the corporations; their labor provides the expanding profit margins.

Ligia Guallpa, WJP executive director, puts it plainly: “There is no labor movement without organizing the new workforce, which just happens to be immigrants in New York. Which is the exact same way the labor unions got started back in the day, right? They got started by immigrants.” (Labor Notes, May 20)

Strikebreaker nurses

The valiant nurses at St. Vincent’s Hospital in Worcester, Mass., are still locked in their struggle with hospital owner, Tenet Healthcare Corporation, over adequate compensation and safe staffing. Tenet has undercut the nurses by hiring itinerant nurses to keep profits flowing amid reports of unsafe practices.

Who are these nurses who would cross the picket line? What motivates them to risk their professional and ethical standards to take a job in a state in which they may not be licensed, at a hospital they are unfamiliar with?

Unfortunately, the answer seems to be money. Salaries for a “strike nurse” are considerably higher than the pay



for the average RN. Tenet is paying millions for nurses to cross the picket line, rather than negotiate with the experienced nurses who know how to care for patients at St. Vincent’s.

Multiple agencies advertise for nurses to travel to hospitals where nurses are striking. Agencies pay travel and room and board expenses. Minimal experience is required from the nurses.

An online listing by the U.S. Nursing Corporation currently advertises a need for nurses for an “indefinite nursing strike” in Massachusetts. (tinyurl.com/252bcyrx)

That doesn’t seem to bode well for St. Vincent’s nurses, as Tenet digs in its heels to fund corporate greed at the expense of patients and the professional standards expected from nurses. Meanwhile, nurses with little experience, or union consciousness, are enticed to work in an unstable hospital environment that their peers have already deemed so unsafe they have walked off the job.

As companies expand into health care empires, RNs are struggling to hold their place at the bargaining table to fight for the well-being of their patients and their fellow nurses. Nurses should be speaking as one voice against capitalist greed instead of being divided by the bosses. □

Shambling recovery from the COVID economic crisis

Continued from page 3

While Biden wanted to claim a lot of credit, he ignored a lot of problems, such as lingering high unemployment, low wages and the threatened loss of housing. All this suffering disproportionately impacts Black, Brown and Indigenous communities, women and gender-oppressed people, people with disabilities and LGBTQ2S+ people.

Labor shortage versus high unemployment

Even with the boost in employment — 559,000 jobs is indeed a big increase — the economy is still down about 7.5 million jobs from the beginning of the pandemic. It will be late next year before the economy fully recovers at this rate of job growth.

According to the Economic Policy Institute, 4.5 million workers have had their hours and/or pay cut because of the pandemic; 3.2 million are unemployed but misclassified, and 3.9 million have dropped out of the labor force. (tinyurl.com/5fu5kj22)

Many people who have dropped out of the labor force are women, who have taken on caregiver roles. They are helping their children with remote learning or providing support for ill family members, or they are afraid they could transmit or catch COVID if they have a face-to-face job.

Even when in-person school is restored, many women will be unable to find affordable childcare for children too young for school. It has become obvious that lack of government-organized childcare penalizes parents and has an especially negative impact on women and

gender-oppressed parents who would otherwise seek work.

Biden has allocated \$39 billion to childcare relief, but it will be months before this program is up and running. Although 204,000 women returned to the workforce in May, according to the BLS report, it is not guaranteed that this trend will continue.

Factor: low wages

Women are a major portion of workers in leisure and hospitality. Restaurants have built their business model on paying servers \$2.13 an hour, supplemented with tips. But during the pandemic some of their staff, who had been out of work, found jobs in warehouses and retail that paid \$15 to \$18, with additional benefits — still inadequate, but much higher than server pay. So now the workers are

broadly demanding higher wages to go back to restaurant work.

In response to this demand, the governors of 25 states, all Republicans, have either stopped or announced that they will soon stop disbursing the \$300-a-week federal supplement. This is ill-thought-out cruelty, because workers spend this money provided by the national government in local economies to lift themselves out of poverty.

The governors and their capitalist cronies hate the idea that the working class can survive without working — although the capitalists, who are parasitic, have grown rich on work done by others.

Perhaps in some states, the combination of federal and state unemployment benefits was more income for many workers than they had received from minimum wage jobs. If true, that’s a strong argument for

raising those states’ minimum wage rates, not for cutting the supplement.

Evictions and foreclosures

According to the U.S. Census, 7 million families are behind on their rent, and 12 million families aren’t sure that they will be able to pay next month’s rent. As of June 2021, over 4.2 million properties were in mortgage forbearance programs that postpone payments, according to the Mortgage Bankers Association.

Legally, it’s far easier to evict someone than to foreclose on a delinquent mortgage.

Congress has passed bills supplying both renters and homeowners with financial assistance to stay in their homes. According to CNBC as of the end of April, at least 20 states had no program to distribute the \$40 billion allocated.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, using its authority in the midst of the COVID-19 crisis to set national public health policy, imposed a moratorium on evictions and foreclosures that is set to expire June 30. A U.S. district court recently held the CDC’s order as unconstitutional, yet it is still in force while the CDC appeals. Various states and municipalities also have moratoriums.

Housing and Urban Development Secretary Marcia Fudge in a May 8 interview on National Public Radio’s “All Things Considered” indicated that HUD was aware of the deadline and the deficiencies of the states’ responses and was taking steps to remedy them.

Throwing millions of families into the streets is not only a recipe for a social explosion. It would also be a major blow to the U.S. financial system, worse than the speculative bubble in 2008. □



Inadequate child care forces women out of workforce.

Legislative hate bills

Trans youth under attack

The following are excerpted comments from panelists at an April 1 webinar, “Transgender Day of Visibility: a Socialist Perspective,” sponsored by Workers World Party, viewable at Workers World YouTube: tinyurl.com/35944sht. In this selection, WWP comrades Ezra Echo and Devin Cole are joined by Indigo Lett, secretary and social media coordinator of the Gulf Coast transgender activist organization STRIVE.

Ezra: According to the American Civil Liberties Union, there have been over 118 anti-LGBTQ+ bills submitted in state legislatures across the U.S. so far in 2021. Most target the transgender community. The bills range from prohibiting health care for transgender youth to excluding transgender youth from athletics and more, with restrictions couched in religious language. Why is there so much recent legislation targeting young trans people in particular? What can LGBTQ+ organizing in the past teach us about mass response to this violence in the present?

Indigo: When COVID happened, I think most kids were out of school. I feel like the right wing had a lot of time to plan out their next move, to try to see what they could do legislatively against the trans liberation movement. The fact was that everyone was more worried about what was going on with COVID. They had enough time to try to slip bills through. They were slipping bills through in Florida in 2020, but we were counteracting them one by one. But for some of the other states, organizers may not have had the wherewithal to do that.

Here in Florida, we have the “Parents’ Bill of Rights”—where parents can pull children out of class if the kids are learning about African American history, for example, or LGBTQ+ history. If their kid is in some sort of a queer or trans group, they can find that out now. It’s really invasive and really terrible in our state. We have another bill about sports. That’s one issue where even some liberals don’t follow trans people. When it gets to sports, it’s “Oh, no, the science says...” But—no! No. Science says otherwise; science says it’s fine!

What can LGBTQ+ organizing in the past teach us? We look especially to the Stonewall Rebellion in 1969 and other parts of the LGBTQ+ movement like STAR (Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries). I think it is our thing we do in STRIVE in the Gulf Coast—how we help the community out. Where people come together and try to connect our fight with everyone else’s. And also understand that it’s OK to be different; it’s OK to have that difference.

We know, as trans people, it’s gonna be an uphill battle. It’s not even a question. We need that camaraderie and that combination of how we fight for each other. To try to continue that fight, because it’s really difficult, especially where we are at in the South. It’s just a battle. The thing we need to learn is to continue to be bold and continue to push ourselves to take those risks. Because trans youth—they can’t. They’re in a position where they can’t do that. And we want to be there for them as much as we can. So each step that we take, especially as millennials, helps get them to a place where they can freely take that next step toward liberation.

Devin: Indigo and I have mentioned STRIVE several times now. For the people who don’t know what STRIVE is, let me give a little bit of a background. Indigo and I live in northwest Florida; we’re bordered right up against Alabama and very close to Mississippi as well. STRIVE stands for Socialist Trans Initiative. We are a transgender advocacy organization. We’re the only one of our kind for over 250 miles around. We provide material support to transgender, nonbinary and [Native] Two Spirit people. We provide emergency housing to trans people who are experiencing homelessness; we help people get on HRT [hormone replacement therapy] and pay for that. We help pay for utilities, for food, for

transportation. We help pay for any work-related—and that does include sex work—any work-related items that trans people may need to survive. We’re in the rural Deep South, and as we’re the only group of this kind in this area, we take the brunt of all transgender oppression in the area.

So why is there so much recent legislation targeting young trans people in particular? They’re the most vulnerable group. Trans kids are the most vulnerable group. I’m one of those trans people, and I believe Indigo can relate as well. We didn’t come out until we were adults. And there’s no doubt that repression in the education system and in the medical system played some role in that. But now you see many more young trans people emboldened at a much younger age. They’re bold!

I’ll never forget back in 2017, I met a 13-year-old trans guy. He was out; his teachers used his correct pronouns; people respected him—and it blew my mind! I’ll be 27 in about two weeks. So you know, it wasn’t too long ago that I was 13. It wasn’t that terribly long ago. But the thought of doing something like that when I was 13—that is just inconceivable to me.

These kids these days are so incredible and so emboldened and so powerful. This legislation is a direct attack on their autonomy by the capitalist ruling class. It’s easier to attack trans kids legislatively, to try to repress that movement. Florida House Bill 24 that Indigo talked about is the “parents’ rights” bill. The GOP angle is that it gives parents more “insight” into their child’s education and health. That’s a smokescreen. What it really does is give parents almost total control over what their child can learn in school, what their child can do in school and what their child says to their health care provider.

If this bill is signed into law and a young trans child goes to the doctor, with the parents not in the room, and they say, “I think I might be trans; I’m interested in learning more about hormone replacement therapy,” or “I am trans,” the doctor would be legally required to inform the parents. Thus effectively outing the trans child to their

parents. If a child comes out to a school worker, to the principal, to the guidance counselor, the school would be legally required to inform the parents that their child has come out.

Oftentimes, if the child has not come out to the parent—and I say this, as someone who grew up in rural Alabama and had a lot of closeted gay friends—when the child comes out to the teacher or to the doctor instead of the parents, it is because the parents are not providing an accepting, affirming household.

So this bill forces the teachers and the doctors to repress these children, these LGBTQ+ youth. It forces them to repress! LGBTQ+ youth are the easiest targets now in the “culture wars.”

And what can LGBTQ+ organizing in the past teach us? It teaches us that the youth are the future. That’s just the dialectic. That’s a fact. The youth will inherit every movement. And at this moment right now, we’re



WW GRAPHIC: MIRINDA CRISSMAN

experiencing a revolutionary momentum. This legislation is an attempt to stop these incredible youth in their tracks from the revolutionary momentum that they are building themselves.

I’ve been out of high school almost 10 years; Indigo has been out almost 20 years. This is not our generation anymore. This is Gen Z. And what these youth are doing is incredible. The fact they’re being repressed is symptomatic of capitalism and imperialism in a decaying stage, lashing out at the youth as we continue, and as they continue, to push it further into the grave.

Ezra: I’m part of that younger generation. My comrades and I joke that I was the first Gen Z kid, and I came out when I was 19. But I knew that I was gender fluid at 15, mostly because of having access to the internet. We see a lot of that these days—these kids have access to the internet. They have access to seeing real trans people doing real things and living their life. And they know that that can be them too! I love to see all the kids coming into their own and learning about themselves in that way.

That’s why it’s incredibly unjust that we have these different bills trying to tear them down in their tracks and set them back many, many years. Because—for instance—puberty blockers are not permanent. The effects are reversible. But puberty is not reversible. These attacks are baseless, coming from the right wing to tear down young trans people and try to put out their fire. But it’s not going to work that way!

Because the struggle for trans liberation continues. Another great way to learn more is to check out the writing and life work of Workers World Party comrade Leslie Feinberg. Ze was a revolutionary communist who put theory into practice every day, advancing the struggles against imperialism, racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, the prison-industrial complex—you name it.

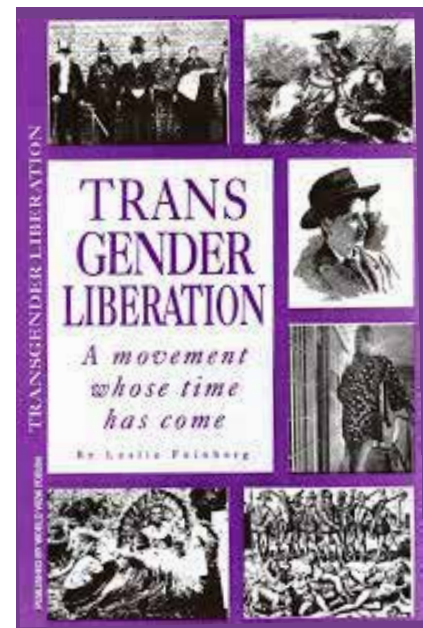
Hir works—from “Transgender Liberation” to the widely influential novel “Stone Butch Blues” to “Rainbow Solidarity with Cuba,” on the LGBTQ+ advances made in revolutionary Cuba—are all sure to raise your class consciousness and inspire you to join in the fight for your own liberation too. You can read more at workers.org/books and lesliefeinberg.net.

Thanks, Devin and Indigo! On to trans liberation! □



Leslie Feinberg

WW PHOTO: LIZA GREEN



Free download at workers.org/books.

Arizona readies use of Nazi death-camp gas in executions

By Gloria Rubac

In the United States, where support for state-sponsored executions has been dropping for the last decade, where fewer people are being condemned to die and where fewer executions are being carried out, it seems extreme that states are now using firing squads or hangings or electrocutions or gas chambers to carry out legal lynchings.

Thanks to excellent work by European activists, drugs for lethal injections have become extremely hard to find. Drug manufacturers, many based in Europe, will no longer supply drugs for lethal injections to prison systems, including in the U.S. States have resorted to using unregulated compounding pharmacies to produce the drugs.

Nazi death methods

This spring, the state of Arizona prepared to carry out executions with the same gas as the German Nazi regime used. Arizona spent thousands of dollars buying ingredients to execute people with a cyanide gas, Zyklon B, which the Nazis used to murder millions of European Jews, the Roma, LGBTQ+ people, communists and other resistance fighters in concentration camps between 1942 and 1945.

The last time Arizona used its gas chamber was in

1999 to execute Walter LaGrand — the last person put to death by lethal gas anywhere in the U.S. The Tucson Citizen reported “agonizing choking and gasping” during his execution. “He began coughing violently — three or four loud hacks — and made a gagging sound before falling forward.” It took 18 minutes for LaGrand to die.

Denouncing Arizona’s plans

Christoph Heubner, executive vice president of the International Auschwitz Committee, told the New York Times in a June 2 interview, “For Auschwitz survivors, the world will finally come apart at the seams, if in any place on this Earth, the use of Zyklon B in the killing of human beings is considered again. In their eyes, this is a disgraceful act that is unworthy of any democracy and, moreover, insults the victims of the Holocaust.”

Martin Weiss, Austrian ambassador to the U.S., tweeted: “The death penalty is in and of itself a cruel and unusual punishment. Getting ready to use Zyklon B for executions is just beyond the pale.”

For death penalty abolitionists, all execution methods are horrific, as is the death penalty itself. No state, no government, should be in the practice of killing people.



Anti-death penalty campaigners protest outside the prison in Florence, Ariz., where Joseph Wood was executed July 23, 2014.

Abolitionists are fighting not only to end prisons, as they are known today, but also to end legal lynchings.

As a call and response chant used in Texas says: “Executions? Shut ‘em down! The death penalty? Shut it down! Racist courts? Shut ‘em down! Lying cops? Shut ‘em down! The whole damn system? Shut it down!”

Gloria Rubac is a decades-long activist in the Texas Death Penalty Abolition Movement.

Smart Communications – another prison profiteer

By Cindy Miller

Many people do not realize that the mail one sends to an incarcerated loved one in Pennsylvania must now be sent to Smart Communications in St. Petersburg, Fla. There the mail is scanned, then sent digitally to prisons in the state, where copies are printed and distributed to recipients. The originals are kept for 45 days. Incarcerated people never receive the actual mail their loved ones sent.

How and why did this happen?

On Aug. 29, 2018, Pennsylvania Corrections Secretary John Wetzel ordered a lockdown of all state facilities after correctional officials allegedly got sick from substances in incoming mail. It didn’t matter that this highly suspect story was disproven by many. Plus, it is well-known that guards are the major source of drugs in prisons.

Yet based on these fabricated accounts, the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections contacted Jon Logan, owner and CEO of Smart Communications

Holding, Inc. And on Sept. 4, 2018, in a no-bid, 3-year contract, the PA DOC executed an "emergency" agreement with Smart Communications to scan and process prisoners’ postal mail for \$15.8 million. (tinyurl.com/3dvv9p3d)

It is highly suspect that a company could be found and a plan could be implemented in six days; so, was this already planned? “They were the only company that could do it as quickly,” Wetzel claimed.

We see this contract for what it truly is — yet another way to completely privatize every facet of an incarcerated person’s life. It extracts any human emotion (like getting a real drawing from your child instead of a copy) from the daily lives of the incarcerated.

It leaves feelings of simmering rage and despair. This is one of the reasons why there are so many angry and rebellious incarcerated people. The prison administrations’ solution is to implement yet more and more retaliations and punishments.

This contract is paid for with tax dollars,

leeching money from the families of the incarcerated. In frustration, many incarcerated people in Pennsylvania started to use email to communicate, even though it costs 25 cents a shot. However in order to use email, the incarcerated person (or their family) must purchase an electronic tablet at a grossly inflated price from the prison commissary.

Smart Communications also offers the potential for deep surveillance. In March 2018, the company pitched a proposal for their Mailguard system to the Virginia DOC. It stated: “Investigators will have access to the postal mail sender’s email address, physical address, IP address, mobile cell number, GEO GPS location tracking, exact devices used when accessing system, any related accounts the sender may also make or use.” Fortunately their proposal

was rejected. (thevice.com, March 24)

The renewal of this Smart Communications contract is in September, and Food Not Bombs Solidarity, along with incarcerated member Jerome Coffey, plans another demonstration to expose and protest the privatization schemes of the prison profiteers. □



Solitary confinement ‘torture chambers’

By Betsey Piette
Philadelphia

Calling for “solidarity, not solitary,” dozens of people — including organizers from prisoners’ rights groups, survivors of solitary confinement and state legislators — rallied outside the Eastern State Penitentiary in Philadelphia June 1.

They called for passage of HB1037, Pennsylvania legislation that would cap the maximum days in solitary confinement at 15. This is in accordance with U.N. Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners — named the “Nelson Mandela Rules” in honor of the longtime political prisoner in the struggle against South African apartheid. The Pennsylvania legislation would prevent people under 21, LGBTQ+ people and aging (55 years+) community members from being held in solitary.

A June 2 press conference also at Eastern State Penitentiary featured legislators in support of HB1037; this was hosted by State Representatives Tina Davis and

Donna Bullock and State Senators John Kane and Katie Muth. Both events were organized by the Human Rights Coalition of Pennsylvania (HRC), the Abolitionist Law Center (ALC), the Coalition against Death by Incarceration and the Solidarity Not Solitary PA-CAIC (Campaign for Alternatives to Isolated Confinement).

The events’ press release stated: “Mental health experts note that solitary confinement causes anxiety and depression in the vast majority of people forced ‘in the hole,’ exacerbating existing mental health issues. The suicide rates for those in solitary confinement are, at minimum, double compared to incarcerated community members sanctioned to ‘general population.’ Recidivism rates are also higher for those who have spent time in solitary confinement.”

Birthplace of U.S. solitary confinement

Eastern State Penitentiary in Philadelphia, opened by Quakers in the 19th century, was the birthplace of mass institutionalized solitary confinement in

the U.S. The practice was later widely discredited and considered inhumane, counterproductive and akin to torture. But in the 1970s it was widely used, as the “war on drugs” led to a rapid rise in mass incarceration.

At the rally John Thompson, with the ALC, noted that the revitalization of solitary confinement in the U.S. coincided with state efforts to suppress Black national liberation. Prison officials particularly targeted organizers who stood up to abuse from guards or complained to administration. Thompson said, “Solitary confinement was used to break activists.”

Several speakers were survivors of long-term solitary confinement in Pennsylvania prisons. Their testimonials were very emotional. Many had been released after cases against them were exposed as based on lies. They emphasized that while they are survivors, they can’t forget the people still confined. One described being stripped naked, air blown on him and a light shone on him 24 hours a day. He was chained to a metal bed for months.

The event included a mock cell complete with a concrete bed. Those who had never experienced solitary confinement were encouraged to spend just five minutes there and reflect on what it would be to survive this 24/7.

The ‘torture chamber’ of solitary

Patricia Marshall Vickers, who helped found the HRC in 2001, described solitary confinement as “a torture chamber — a means to punish, retaliate, abuse and mentally break a person.” The HRC has received thousands of letters from different prisoners across Pennsylvania, all describing similar brutal conditions.

Incarcerated people report being sprayed with a chemical that burns their skin, but not being allowed to wash it off or receive medical treatment. Many report being stripped naked and placed in a “restraint chair,” with arms and feet strapped to the chair for extended periods of time.

Abusive guards withhold or

Continued on page 7

The new abolitionists

By Mumia Abu-Jamal

If we are to adopt the name of abolitionist, let us do so openly, mindfully and aware of its great and true significance.

For guild history has rewritten the texts and penned what Black historian Lerone Bennett has called “theology” rather than truth to depict some figures of the past, to create a past that never lived.

We all know of Lincoln, for we were taught of him as children: “The Great Emancipator.” Bennett’s view is that he was (as were most men of his era) a white supremacist who was “forced into glory” (the title of Bennett’s book, by the way). He was many things, but he wasn’t an abolitionist.

In his pre-presidential speech before Cooper Union in New York, Lincoln gave a contemptuous tone to his comments about “abolitionists,” and he took great pains to separate himself from a group seen as mad by the elites. John Brown, perhaps the noblest white figure of his age, is but a madman on Lincoln’s tongue.

But any considered vista of history shows us that this small, focused and brave group sent vibrations of honor

through the annals of time and gave us new ways of reliving the abolitionist creed in new eras of U.S. history.

Both Howard Zinn and Staughton Lynd, two of the most-loved and most-respected historians of the 1960s, saw the youth of the Civil Rights Movement as the new abolitionists.

Abolitionists are, simply put, those beings who look out upon their time and say, “No.”

They want to abolish state policies that



Mumia Abu-Jamal

they cannot abide. Slavery. Mass incarceration. The death penalty. Juvenile life. Solitary confinement. Police terrorism.

Those goals are worthy of the name “abolitionist.” Only the fire and will seem to be lacking. Let us recover their vision — and build new ones that soar towards the bright morning of Freedom.

And yet — and yet — before we hug ourselves in isolated, sweet self-contentment, let us ponder our history and one of its most potent turning points.

Our revered abolitionist ancestor, Frederick Douglass, as the Civil War was dying down in favor of the ending of slavery, warned his abolitionist brethren and sisters to beware of thinking that the battle was over. In his typical, lyrical, Southern-informed proverb, he told them: “Slavery has been fruitful in giving itself names. It has been called ‘the peculiar institution,’ ‘the social system’ and ‘the impediment.’”

“It has been called by a great many names, and it will call itself by yet another name; and you and I and all of us had better wait and see what new form this old monster will assume, in what new skin this old snake will come forth next.”



It is our abolitionist duty to hear Douglass well, as we tackle monsters we dare to think are new, but are, in actuality, “old wine in new bottles.” If he had been heeded, perhaps Reconstruction could’ve been extended, instead of its miserable 10 years. Instead, too many abolitionists took off their fighting clothes and went back home, satisfied that the good fight had been won.

Let us fight with Light in our eyes, that we see what is before us, and not succumb to New Jim Crows, ever again.

Long live John Africa!

In the Spirit of the Ancestors!

This column, originally published June 17, 2015, is part of a series of “Abolition Statements” from members of the Abolition Journal Collective and Editorial Review Board. See more at tinyurl.com/5ddunrjr.

The last words of Shaka Sankofa

By Shaka Sankofa

Shaka Sankofa was lynched by the state of Texas June 22, 2000. These were his last words:

I would like to say that I did not kill Bobby Lambert. That I’m an innocent Black man who is being murdered. This is a lynching happening in America tonight.

There’s overwhelming and compelling evidence of my innocence that has never been heard in any court of America. What is happening here is an outrage for any civilized country, to anybody anywhere, to look at what’s happening here. It is wrong. I thank all of the people who have rallied to my cause. They’ve been standing in support of me and have finished with me.

I say to Mr. Lambert’s family, I did not kill Bobby Lambert. You are pursuing the execution of an innocent man.

I want to express my sincere thanks to all of you. We must continue to move forward and do everything we can to outlaw legal lynching in America. We must continue to stay strong all around the world, and people must come together to stop the systematic killing of poor and innocent Black people. We must continue to

stand together in unity and to demand a moratorium on all executions.

We must not let this murder/lynching be forgotten tonight. We must take it to the nation. We must keep our faith. We must go forward. We recognize that many leaders have died: Malcolm X, Martin Luther King Jr. and others who stood up for what was right. They stood up for what was just. We must, you must, carry on that tradition. We may lose this battle, but we will win the war. This death, this lynching will be avenged.

So, you all stay strong, continue to move forward. Know that I love all of you. I love the people, I love all of you for your strength, for your courage, for your dignity, the way you have come here tonight and the way you have protested and kept this nation together. Keep moving forward. Slavery couldn’t stop us. The lynchings couldn’t stop us in the South. This lynching will not stop us tonight. We will go forward. Our destiny in this country is freedom and liberation. We will gain our freedom and liberation by any means necessary. By any means necessary, we keep marching forward.

Bianca [Jagger], make sure that the state does not get my body. Make sure

that we get my name as Shaka Sankofa. My name is not Gary Graham. Make sure that it is properly presented on my grave: Shaka Sankofa.

We must move forward. Minister Robert Muhammed. Ashanti Chimurenga, I love you for standing with me, my sister. You are a strong warrior queen. You will continue to be strong in everything that you do. Reverend Al Sharpton, I love you, my brother. Bianca Jagger. I love all of you. Reverend Jesse Jackson, know that this murder, this lynching will not be forgotten. I love you, too, my brother. This is genocide in America.

You can kill a revolutionary, but you cannot stop the revolution. The revolution will go on. You are the people that must carry that revolution on in order to liberate our children from genocide.

To my sons, to my daughters, I love all of you. You have been wonderful. Keep your heads up. Keep moving forward. We will gain our freedom and liberation in this country, and we will do it by any means necessary. We will keep marching. March on, Black people. Keep your heads high. March on.

We’re going to end the death penalty in this country. This is nothing more than

state-sanctioned murder, state-sanctioned lynching, right here in America, and right here tonight.

They know I’m innocent. They’ve got the facts to prove it. But they cannot acknowledge my innocence, because to do so would be to publicly admit their guilt. This is something these racist people will never do.

You must stay strong. You must continue to hold your heads up and to be there. I love all of you who are standing with me in solidarity. We will prevail. We will keep marching. Keep marching, Black people, Black power. They are killing me tonight. They are murdering me tonight. □



Shaka Sankofa

Solitary confinement ‘torture chambers’

Continued from page 6

contaminate their food. Water in cells is cut off for days. Guards turn off heat in the winter and air conditioning in the summer. Basic rights like sunshine and showers are denied. Guards charge into solitary cells, severely beat the incarcerated person and subject them to constant verbal abuse. Incarcerated people with mental health issues are told by guards to “go ahead and kill yourself.”

Vickers stated that “85% of people in solitary are there for disobeying an order, not for violent behavior. Pennsylvania prison administrators claim no one is held past 90 days, but we know they have held people for years.” Former Black Panther Party member Russell Maroon Shoatz spent 33 years in solitary confinement in

Pennsylvania prisons.

Commenting on the recent one-year anniversary of the police murder of George Floyd, Vickers said, “We face police brutality on the streets, and the exact same thing happens inside the prisons where our loved ones face abusive guards. We need laws that hold the guards accountable.”

Abolish solitary!

Organizers expressed optimism for passage of HB1037, as situated within a broader wave of racial justice organizing and legislation seeking to reform and abolish solitary confinement. There were

three recent major victories against solitary confinement in New Jersey, New York and in Allegheny County in Pennsylvania, where Pittsburgh is located.



Inside the Eastern State Penitentiary, supporters gather for HB1037 on June 2.

WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

“This is the start of people seeing the system for what it is,” said Saudia Durrant with the ALC. “In Pennsylvania prisons, there are over 2,000 people every day —

disproportionately Black, Brown and poor — subjected to the state-sponsored violence of solitary, hidden behind prison walls and removed from human connection and rehabilitation. To transform our societies, we must end the use of long-term isolation and create alternative methods of care and rehabilitation.”

Marta Guttenberg contributed to this article.

For anti-imperialist solidarity in defense of Syria!

By Ted Kelly

These remarks are excerpted from a June 3 livestream event, “Eyewitness Syria,” featuring speakers from the International Delegation to the 2021 Syrian Presidential Election. Speakers Johnny Achi, Kobi Guillory, Wyatt Miller and Ted Kelly were all signatories to the delegation’s statement, found at bit.ly/syria2021. A full video of this event can be found at youtu.be/SVPYUMUR5sKs.

National self-determination — the national question — is central to our analysis. It is central to an understanding of the global class war that Sam Marcy laid out going back to 1950. (See workers.org/marcy for Marcy’s writings on the subject.)

As the Communist Manifesto says, “The history of all hitherto existing societies is the history of class struggle.” We know that, in our society, national oppression is not secondary to this history but is a central component of it.

The 20th century taught us that socialist revolutions tied to national liberation struggles are the most successful.

Our role is to bring a revolutionary class consciousness to the working class, to national movements, to movements of identity and oppression. But our role is also to understand and emphasize the interconnectedness of capitalist oppression with national oppression and gender oppression.

We need to make sure movements of revolutionary socialists don’t lose their sensitivity to these questions, and, indeed, that the movement of revolutionary socialism is led by the most oppressed.

Confronting disinformation about Syria

We have to be dialectical about this. We have to investigate a system, study its internal contradictions, the forces working on the system.

An understanding of the Syrian state can lead you to understand that the multicultural, multiethnic, multireligious character of Syria is central to its functioning.

There is a lot of effort being put into diverting attention or confusing this understanding of self-determination. Carving up Syria into segregated ethnographic enclaves and then backing separatist efforts is an imperialist tactic; we saw this in Iraq. I’m glad someone in the chat asked about the so-called area of Rojava in Syria; that’s become a very big meme for people on the online Western left.

But ask those who are calling for the overthrow of a sovereign government because they read something online about the Kurds, ask them if they know about Syria’s protection of the right of self-determination for the Assyrians. Or the Armenians. Or the Yazidis. Ask them about the protection of religious/ethnic groups in Syria like the Druze, Alawi, Jews and Greek Orthodox followers.

Why don’t they know that the current

Syrian state protects these rights and identities? And considers the mosaic of Syrian multiethnic, multireligious society an asset?

Ask them if they know that today, June 3, in Al-Malikiyah (Derik in Kurdish) an Assyrian activist named Husam Alkass was abducted by the YPG, an anti-government, ethno-nationalist Kurdish militia armed and funded by the Pentagon. This kidnapping could only have taken place with the cooperation of the so-called Syrian Democratic Forces, the anti-government militia also armed and funded by the Pentagon.

Ask them if they know that in Derik, where this kidnapping took place, in Al-Hasakah, over a million people are experiencing water scarcity because of the combined catastrophe of U.S. sanctions and U.S./Turkish military occupation.

Problems of Western left on Syria

But even beyond the lack of knowledge of what the Syrian state does do right, there is something deeply racist and deeply self-centered about this “leftist” attitude towards Syria. This is a problem on the left in the U.S. right now. Groups that are extremely hostile to Syria’s sovereign state range from anarchists to pacifists to “socialists” who compromise with capitalism.

Lt. Colonel Alfred Dreyfus was a right-wing artillery officer and commander in the imperial France army. Does that mean that the socialists and anti-racists should have said nothing when in 1894, he was falsely convicted of treason as part of a festering explosion of anti-Jewish paranoia? Should other French Jews have said, “we don’t agree with his politics, so I guess we don’t have any stake in this racist frame-up”?

Are you going to tell me that you have nothing to protest about the kidnapping of Alex Saab because he is a businessman? As if, well, I only protest the false arrest and kidnapping of revolutionary socialists. Or anarchists. Or whatever.

Who are these Westerners that are setting parameters on anti-imperialist solidarity? Since when were we only supposed to get out of bed when socialist countries are under attack? When the monstrous armies of empire are directed towards colonized or developing countries who don’t share our particular political analysis, do we say, “not my problem”?

There are 39 sovereign countries under U.S. sanctions — 40 including the nation

of Puerto Rico, a U.S. colony. There are at least 1,000 U.S. military bases around the world — that we know of! — including in countries the U.S. is currently blockading, like Guantanamo Bay in Cuba. One-third of the population of the planet, one in three human beings, is sanctioned by the U.S. Before you decide whether these people are worthy of your solidarity, are you going to go scan through the Wikipedia page of each of these 40 countries to see if you agree with the results of their most recent election?

That would be chauvinism, imperialist chauvinism of the worst kind: the deluded kind, the kind that doesn’t even know it’s chauvinism or pretends it doesn’t know.

Instead, it’s much easier to be a revolutionary for someone else’s country.

Where you aren’t the one risking your life, where your family isn’t at risk of being displaced or hurt or killed. Where it isn’t your water infrastructure, your roads, your schools and hospitals being destroyed. You can feel like a revolutionary and overthrow a government without any of the hard work of building a new workers’ state in its place.

You get the picture? It’s chauvinism. It’s liberalism. Nothing made this more clear to me than visiting Syria and speaking to Syrians. I am so grateful to Johnny Achi, E.E., co-founder, Arab Americans for Syria, for making that possible. These are things I knew in my head before, but now I also know them in my heart. I know them in my soul.

Lenin on the national question

V.I. Lenin said: “The Socialist of another country cannot expose the government and bourgeoisie of a country at war with ‘his own’ nation, and not only because he does not know that country’s



A full video can be found at youtu.be/SVPYUMUR5sKs.

language, history, specific features, etc., but also because such exposure is part of imperialist intrigue, and not an internationalist duty.

“[One] is not an internationalist who vows and swears by internationalism.

One is an internationalist who in a really internationalist way combats ‘his own’ bourgeoisie, ‘his own’ social-chauvinists.

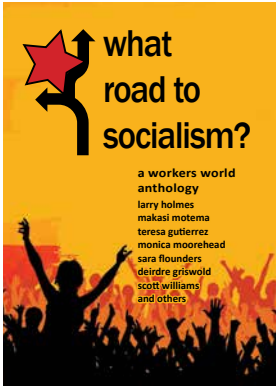
“Socialists in every country must now unfailingly and more vigorously than usual expose their own government and their own bourgeoisie. They must expose the secret agreements they have concluded, and are concluding, with their imperialist allies for the division of colonies, spheres of influence, joint financial undertakings in other countries, buying up of shares, monopoly arrangements, concessions, etc.”

The rise of right-wing political Islam and the funding, training and arming of these reactionary right-wing groups, like Johnny Achi said, is all being done in order to install puppet regimes in these countries. To understand first of all that this is not a civil war, but rather an imperialist attack by foreign capitalists, is to begin to understand what the Syrian people have been resisting. And what the Axis of Resistance, the allied forces in the region, are up against.

Ask yourself: what are you doing to fight back against the suffocating sanctions imposed on Syria? Which government do you have the ability to hold accountable? If you truly care about the Syrian people, let’s start with the root of the problem. That’s what being a radical is: addressing things at the root. The root of the problem, the root of all this evil, “the greatest purveyor of violence in the world today,” as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said, “is my own government.” □



The International Delegation to the 2021 Syrian Presidential Election.



What Road to Socialism?

A new Workers World anthology, confronting the burning questions and key contradictions during this deadly pandemic and global capitalist meltdown.

Download free ebook or PDF formats. Also available in paperback. Visit workers.org/books to get your copy.

Topics include:

- COVID-19 and the deepening crisis of capitalism
- Reform or revolution?
- The state and building for revolution
- The centrality of fighting racism
- The working class will make history
- Fighting all forms of oppression: gender, sexuality, disability, and age
- Socialism or death: Socialist countries lead the way to the future
- What is socialism?

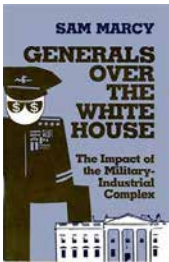
Generals over the White House

The impact of the Military-Industrial Complex

By Sam Marcy

“Our view of the military differs fundamentally from the anti-militarism of the liberal and progressive elements in capitalist society. They fail to recognize that the structure of capitalist society, that is, the relationship between the basic classes, determines the politics of the capitalist state, no matter which policy the governing group may pursue. This policy is inevitably imperialist and today inexorably serves the military-industrial complex, which, willy-nilly, is propelled in the direction of imperialist war.”

Read it online at workers.org/books.



Delegation fights to win Alex Saab’s freedom

By Sara Flounders
Sal Island, Cabo Verde

Flounders took part in a delegation that traveled to Cabo Verde in solidarity with Venezuelan diplomat Alex Saab, who was abducted in June 2020 on orders of the U.S. and held under onerous conditions since then on two of C.V.’s ten islands. Cabo Verde is an archipelago nation, whose population is 560,000, located 400 miles across the Atlantic Ocean to the west of Dakar, Senegal, in West Africa.

June 5 — Our delegation from the International #FreeAlexSaab Solidarity Committee reached Sal Island June 3, hoping to meet with Alex Saab and his legal team and anxious to put an end to his illegal abduction and torturous confinement and to stop an extradition to the United States that would violate international law and disgrace Cabo Verde’s sovereignty before its allies in Africa.

Our goal was to mobilize support to free this Venezuelan diplomat, who was sequestered on political command by U.S. imperialism. Our additional goal was to establish the facts regard-

ing Saab’s seizure and the unjust and brutal handling of his person and to bring these facts before the world. Saab’s case is being fought in the Cabo Verde Supreme Court, so he cannot be immediately extradited. But we fear that unless we can bring international pressure on both the U.S. and Cape Verdean governments, Saab will be abducted to the U.S. where he could disappear in the U.S. injustice system.

We have succeeded in gaining media coverage in various African countries and in mobilizing support from the expatriate C.V. community in Boston, especially from the Boston School Bus Drivers Union, United Steelworkers Local 8751, and in bringing this important struggle before the progressive movement in the U.S.

It’s a political charge

While the Cabo Verde police prevented us from meeting with Alex Saab, meetings with his lawyer in C.V. — Dr. José Manuel Pinto Monteiro — and with Venezuelan ambassador Alejandro Correa Ortega allowed us to establish the true nature of the charges against Saab and how he was treated in captivity. Saab’s own message to the delegation confirmed these results.

Saab was arrested for alleged “money laundering” at a plane refueling in Cabo Verde a year ago, while on his way from Venezuela to Tehran in an attempt to arrange deliveries of food, medicine and fuel oil for the people of Venezuela. From the discussions we held, we could determine that Saab’s seizure had political roots — no crime was involved — with the U.S. behind the seizure, and that his treatment violated his human rights and diplomatic status.

The defense team for Alex Saab makes the point that “it is the executive, not the courts, that decided to arrest Saab. It is the executive, not the courts, that stalled the release of Alex Saab on June 25, 2020, when Interpol cancelled the Red notice so that their American friends could issue the extradition request, and it is the executive as the Supreme Court of Cape Verde itself that has indicated it must decide the ultimate fate of Alex Saab.”

Meeting with attorney

We met June 3 with Dr. Pinto, Saab’s lawyer, who moved to Sal Island so he could meet with Saab 40 minutes each day within the total of four hours a week the courts allow. Besides this writer, others in the delegation included Roger Harris from Corte Madeira, Calif., and two Cabo Verde citizens living among the large expatriate C.V. population of New England, Bishop Felipe Teixeira and Pericles Tevares. Dr. Pinto confirmed to us Saab’s description of torture carried out by two people with U.S. American accents, who put a bag over his head and threatened his life

during harrowing night visits. They cut his wrist with a knife on three different occasions, demanding he sign an agreement of extradition. During the period of confinement, Saab was held for seven months of darkness, 23 hours a day, in a bare concrete cell. It was hard to keep from screaming at these facts. And in addition, Saab, who has cancer, has been prevented from seeing his oncologist the entire time he has been in prison.

Meeting with ambassador

We also met June 3 with Alejandro Correa Ortega, Venezuelan ambassador to Cabo Verde. Correa confirmed that when Saab was arrested — based on an Interpol order of June 12, 2020 — within three hours of the arrest, Venezuela made

official notification to C.V. officials of Alex Saab’s diplomatic immunity. Saab was originally held in a cell on Saint Vincent Island and was moved to Sal Island a week later. Correa was first allowed to meet with Saab June 20, eight days after his seizure, and then not until July 20. Later efforts to meet with Saab were denied. It was outrageous both to deny Saab, himself a diplomat, these visits and doubly illegal to prevent visits by the Venezuelan ambassador. Like Saab’s attorney, Correa confirmed that Saab described to him the torture, night visits and the rest of the treatment that violated his human rights. Both Dr. Pinto and Ambassador Correa confirmed that Saab was denied legal assistance from a larger team of lawyers who were available to defend him, that he was denied visits by diplomatic representatives and was denied visits from doctors, including his oncologist.

Refusal by police

In our attempt to visit Saab, we went to two different police stations to meet with the police chief and gain permission to visit. In both cases we were given run-arounds. We then attempted to send a recording from our delegation. From the street near the building where his kidnappers are holding Saab, you can see that he is surrounded by military police and security with automatic weapons, including snipers on the roof. They grabbed this writer’s phone briefly, with its camera, but photos were able to be saved. It is obvious Saab is imprisoned and being held by force on Sal. He is allowed no movement, and our visit was prohibited. It was important to establish his imprisonment, as the C.V. courts denied suits for habeas



Delegation from the International #FreeAlexSaab Solidarity Committee in Cabo Verde

corpus, falsely claiming that Saab was only held under house arrest. He has no access to the internet or phone. He was, however, able to send us a note that he heard of our delegation.

Saab’s message

“My brothers and sisters, I cannot tell you how touched, how moved and how eternally grateful I am for your support and your expressions of goodwill. . . . “I can only hope that President Biden and all his advisors and especially the people of the DOJ [Department of Justice] are watching and finally waking up to the devastation their illegal sanctions and political blockade have perpetrated against the good people of Venezuela. “I am a lawfully appointed diplomat, as you have acknowledged. My detention is illegal and arbitrary by any reading of international law, and this has been further confirmed as so by the ECOWAS regional Court of Justice on March 15. [ECOWAS is the Economic Community of West African States.] “Disappointingly, Cape Verde has chosen to ignore the binding ruling of the ECOWAS court, as well as the fact that the court has jurisdiction to deal with the matter. The fact that Cape Verde now wishes to renege on international treaties to which it has signed should be a warning to all future investors in the country and anyone thinking that Cape Verde is a stable long-term partner. ...”

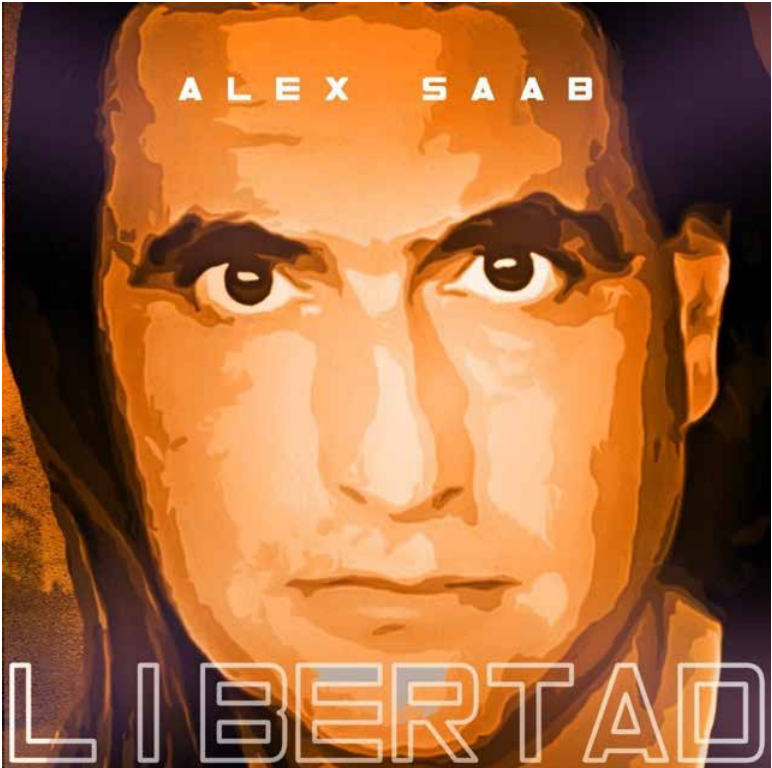
Worldwide support grows

The delegation’s visit led to media coverage in Ghana (ghanaweb.com), Cabo Verde (affairstv.com), Nigeria (platformtimes.com.ng, citimirrornews.com), and other countries, including Portugal and Spain, and in the Orinoco Tribune of Venezuela (orinocotribune.com). The trip coincided with a petition campaign being promoted internationally and especially in the U.S. Please take less than a minute and sign the petition:

bit.ly/FreeAlexSaabVZ



FREE
POLITICAL
PRISONER
ALEX SAAB



Naomi Osaka’s treatment raises question Are pro athletes exploited workers?

In the Communist Manifesto, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels describe the degrading character of work under capitalism, whereby workers “are a commodity,” and the worker “becomes an appendage of the machine.”

This was written in 1848, but the dehumanization still exists. A worker becomes an appendage of their work — be it a hotel, a fast food restaurant or an Amazon warehouse. The capitalists only see value in what a worker can produce, not their value as a whole human person.

Correspondingly, the bosses of the sports-industrial complex treat a professional athlete as a mere appendage of the game.

This was underscored recently by the treatment of tennis superstar Naomi Osaka. Since her win in the 2018 U.S. Open, an insensitive — and worse — barrage of reporter comments has compounded her struggles with depression and anxiety. Osaka — whose mother is Japanese and father is Haitian — has been questioned about everything from her race, nationality, age and mental health challenges to her on-court performance against Serena Williams and her principled solidarity with Black Lives Matter.

Osaka was fined \$15,000 after declining to participate in post-match media interviews during the French Open. This spotlights, for the umpteenth time, the

commodification of even highly paid — and highly skilled — professional athletes. They are chastised and punished when they prioritize their personal well-being over the business of athletic competition.

This is most notably the case with Black athletes and other athletes of color.

Osaka withdrew from the competition altogether “to protect my mental health.”

More than a century of racist indignities

The racist treatment of Osaka is part of a thread running through the entire history of professional sports in the U.S.

In the early years of professional sports, Indigenous players such as Jim Thorpe (football) and Louis Sockalexis (baseball) were subjected to racist abuse. Teams adopted names and created mascots demeaning to Indigenous people and culture. These names are only beginning to be dropped, while some teams, notably the Atlanta baseball and Kansas City football, are steadfastly holding onto their offensive team names.

Courageous athletes who “broke the color line” — including Wataru Misaka (1947, NBA), Earl Lloyd (1950, NBA), Jackie Robinson (1947, MLB) and Marion Motley and Bill Willis (All-America Football Conference, later NFL) — endured taunts, slurs and even death threats throughout their careers.

A bold stand on political issues rarely goes unpunished. Muhammad Ali was

banned from boxing and found guilty of draft evasion for refusing to fight in the Vietnam War. Tommie Smith and John Carlos were ostracized for their courageous black-fisted protest at the 1968 Mexico City Summer Olympics. Colin Kaepernick and LeBron James have been vilified for their social justice activism.

White male fans recently physically assaulted Black basketball players Kyrie Irving, Trae Young and Russell Westbrook during the NBA playoffs.

But solidarity is always there. Prominent Black athletes rallied behind Ali, and players of all races have emulated Kaepernick’s “taking the knee.” Basketball stars Stephen Curry and Kyrie Irving, Olympic gymnast Laurie Hernandez, Olympic runner Usain Bolt, tennis great Serena Williams and several Japanese athletes have supported Osaka.

Patriarchy rules supreme

Golfer Michelle Wie West has reversed plans to retire from playing, goaded into action by Trump attorney Rudy Giuliani’s blatantly sexist and racist comments trivializing her athleticism.

Women and gender-oppressed athletes are treated as second-class players, if that. Not only are they insulted, diminished, marginalized and sexualized, they are grossly underpaid. Megan Rapinoe, captain of the U.S. women’s soccer team, is leading a sex-discrimination class action

lawsuit over pay discrepancies between men and women in professional soccer.

Nowhere is the pay differential more glaring than in pro basketball. The base minimum salary in the Women’s National Basketball Association is \$58,710 compared to around \$925,000 in the NBA.

The WNBA players have stood out for their activism. Their on-court protests for Black Lives Matter have inspired athletes of all genders — and generations — to take stronger positions against white supremacy.

The overarching patriarchal culture in pro sports makes it difficult, even in 2021, for LGBTQ+ players to come out of the closet. A March 2020 study shows half of them experiencing taunts or insults. (salon.com, April 8)

Women, gender-oppressed and LGBTQ+ players of color are doubly and triply abused in the cesspool of bigotry that is professional sports.

In the final analysis, even with high salaries, athletes are still workers and are expected to generate profit — what Marxists call surplus value — for the team owners.

We hail the courage of Naomi Osaka and all those who have taken on white supremacy, misogyny, anti-LGBTQ2S+ bigotry, ableism and the profits-before-people mindset — on and off the playing field. □

In solidarity with Naomi Osaka

Statement from Disability Justice and Rights Caucus of Workers World Party

The Disability Justice and Rights Caucus of Workers World Party expresses its unwavering solidarity with tennis player Naomi Osaka.

Once again Osaka has drawn attention to problems so many people face every day. The world’s second-ranked tennis player stated she would not participate in press interviews following her matches at the 2021 French Open because she needs to protect her mental health.

Other athletes have also spoken openly about their struggles with depression, such as National Basketball Association players Kyrie Irving, DeMar DeRozan and Kevin Love, along with Olympic swimming champion Michael Phelps. Osaka is the first major athlete in recent memory to walk away from a tournament to protect her mental health.

The fact that Osaka is considered by many to be the world’s best women’s tennis player has helped elevate the issue of mental health to a major global topic.

Osaka’s decision did not sit well with the French Open officials, who fined her \$15,000 for not going to the press room after winning her first match on May 31. They even threatened to disqualify Osaka if she refused to participate in any press briefings. That is when Osaka decided to withdraw entirely from the French Open, rather than let officials deny her control over her life.

Depression affects over 264 million people worldwide. It can be a debilitating condition that makes daily life functions difficult. People with depression often isolate themselves because interactions are so difficult to carry out. Depression takes over your thoughts, your confidence, your willingness to get through the day. Nearly

25 percent of people with depression also suffer from anxiety.

Being “depressed” or “anxious” is often said when feeling sad or nervous. This is not the same as depression that makes you doubt yourself or question your abilities.

Depression and mental health

Osaka said she has been dealing with depression since her 2018 U.S. Open win over Serena Williams. That match grew more and more contentious after racist treatment of Williams cost her a point and a game. Post-match press questions also cast doubt on Osaka’s skills and tennis acumen, implying that Williams didn’t lose because Osaka outplayed her.

That kind of hostility can crush anyone. Osaka was 20 years old at the time. She was playing her first major tournament, in which she reached a final in a Grand Slam — one of the four most prestigious tennis tournaments.

It is no surprise that depression took hold and ultimately stayed with Osaka. Serena Williams has also spoken out about her post-partum depression. At the French Open in 2018, she wore a compression suit to prevent more blood clots from forming. This is another time that French Open officials overrode the health of a player. They banned the suit from being worn.

It was only after Naomi Osaka posted a statement detailing more information about her depression, introversion and anxiety, that the French Open officials eased up on their hostility toward her. It was not enough for her to say her mental health had to be protected. They forced her to say more. Having to “prove” your depression, to explain yourself, is a

long-standing practice of any boss and far too many doctors. Osaka’s decision not to do press interviews, in order to protect her mental health, should have been respected, not fined.

Tennis has been a growing multibillion-dollar industry since 2016, based on the combined revenue from television and live streaming of the Australian Open, French Open, Wimbledon and the U.S. Open.

Spokesperson for social justice

Naomi Osaka has taken on this money-making machine before. During the global pandemic, three of the four majors went ahead with their tournaments, saying they could not afford to lose so much income.

She spoke frequently about the racism she faces because she is Haitian-Japanese. She has been outspoken against police brutality. When Jacob Blake was paralyzed after being shot seven times in the back by Kenosha, Wis., police, she stepped back from playing in the semi-finals of the Western and Southern Open.

On her Twitter feed, Osaka stated, “I don’t expect anything drastic to happen with me not playing, but if I can get a conversation started in a majority white sport I consider that a step in the right direction. Watching the continued genocide of Black people at the hand of the police is honestly making me sick to my stomach.” (Aug. 27, 2020)

At every U.S. Open match Osaka played in 2020, she



Naomi Osaka

wore a mask emblazoned with the name of a Black person killed by cops. The parents of Trayvon Martin and Arnaud Arbery publicly thanked Osaka for wearing a mask bearing their murdered sons’ names after she won the U.S. Open.

Naomi Osaka is setting an example of speaking out against racism while defending her mental health needs. In doing so, she becomes a leader for the next generation to demand better treatment and more respect. She can connect to more people through Instagram and Twitter than she can answering the inane and repetitive questions asked in post-match briefings.

It will take getting rid of capitalism and the profit motive that ignores our needs to ultimately build a society that respects the health and well-being of workers and stamps out racism, gender bias, bigotry, hostility to disabled people and all similar oppressions. □

SUPPORT DISABLED LIBERATION !



From each according to our abilities,
to each according to our needs

Disability Justice and Rights Caucus of Workers World Party
djrcwwp@workers.org 212-627-2994 • 147 W. 24 St 2nd Floor NY, NY 10011

In Palestine, police raids — and resistance

By Minnie Bruce Pratt

In the struggle of the Palestinian people for self-determination and against Israeli occupation, a new stage of resistance seems to be emerging.

On May 10, the U.S.-backed Israeli Defense Forces began another genocidal bombing of Gaza, Palestine territory, which under occupation has become an enormous open air prison.

That latest assault was retaliation for Palestinian resistance, for neighbors trying to stop illegal Zionist evictions of Palestinian families in Sheikh Jarrah, a neighborhood in East Jerusalem. At the same time, Israeli police raided Jerusalem’s Al-Aqsa Mosque during the Eid Al-Fitr prayers signaling the end of Ramadan for millions of Muslims around the world.

Then, May 18, ten of thousands of Palestinian workers throughout the occupied territories staged a general strike to protest the Israeli evictions and assaults. As forces in Gaza fired rockets in self-defense against Israeli bombing, Palestinians

inside and outside Israeli-enforced borders acted together in a powerful show of unity. The strike pressured the Israeli state to call off its genocidal attacks.

This May 18 was the 72nd anniversary of the Palestinian Nakba, when in 1948 Israeli military forces drove 700,000 Palestinians out of their homes into exile and destroyed hundreds of towns and villages, in order to form the state of Israel.

Police raids on resistance

Within a week of the general strike, Israel retaliated against the strengthened resistance by ordering mass arrests of Palestinians who are Israeli citizens. Police raids began May 24 under operation “Law and Order,” a plan approved by Minister of Internal Security Amir Ohana and Commissioner of Israeli Police Kobi Shabtai.

Palestinian citizens of Israel, who make up 20% of the population, have shared warnings of the Israeli mass arrests on social media: “This is a declaration of war. The Israelis will storm more than 500 homes to kidnap our children and youth.

This is not just an attempt at intimidation, and it is not just a policy of intimidation. This is an unprecedented war on Palestinians at home, and it will be carried out under the cover of a humiliating silence. Our people must act now and immediately to thwart this war. The whole world must be shaken now.” (middleeasteye.net, May 24)

According to Al Jazeera, Israeli police say 1,550 Palestinians living in Israel have been arrested since May 9. (tinyurl.com/7rwvjkvz)

International solidarity

But Palestine is not alone. People around the world have been out in the streets in solidarity, and others are fighting for institutional and governmental support for Palestine.

In Ireland, the City Council of Belfast passed a motion June 2 supporting the expulsion of the Israeli ambassadors from both Ireland and Britain. The

motion described Israel’s assaults on Gaza as the “ongoing ethnic cleansing of Palestinians” and pointed out that “illegal settlement expansion represents flagrant breaches of international law.” It cited a growing list of human rights groups which say that Israeli policy amounts to apartheid and crimes against humanity. The Belfast motion follows calls in the Irish parliament to impose sanctions on Israel. (middleeastmonitor.com, June 3)

Meanwhile, more than 1,000 Canadian artists and workers signed an open letter of solidarity with Palestinians living under Israel’s military occupation. The letter denounces Israel for its “apartheid and settler colonialism” and calls for Canadian cultural institutions to support Palestine through the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) campaign by ending cooperation with Israeli-sponsored art and cultural activities. □



Belfast, Ireland, supports Palestine, Sept. 11, 2018.

Cops kicked out of Seattle Pride events

By Jim McMahan
Seattle

Following the anti-police Stonewall tradition, organizers of important annual Pride events in Seattle are saying: “No to racist, bigoted cops at LGBTQ+ Pride Month!”

Charlette LeFevre and Philip Lipson, directors of the Capitol Hill Pride Festival (CHPF), announced in a press release issued May 21 that cops will be banned from their June 26-27 events this year. Trans Pride Seattle, which mobilizes a strong march, rally and festival every year, agrees with banning participation by the cops, which this organization has done since 2017.

While announcing the ban on police attending Pride events, the CHPF called on the Seattle Police Department to fire the six cops who traveled to the Jan. 6 Washington, D.C., racist invasion of the Capitol. On the issue of how the Pride Fest would be protected from far-right

groups, LeFevre said it’s likely cops are aligned with some of them. The CHPF expressed support for the banning of cops at New York City Pride activities.

Elayne Wylie, producer of Trans Pride Seattle, as well as executive director of the Gender Justice League said, “We have produced something similar since 2017. We have limited the presence of SPD by enacting our own internal security measures.” She said that in 2019, “our team was able to prevent more than 150 incursions from that small group of [ultra-right] Proud Boys. I don’t think that the SPD could have done that . . . our community was very motivated.”

Year of protests vs. police terror

The decisions to bar police participation at Pride activities followed and were influenced by the year of demonstrations across the country against police violence after cops murdered George Floyd in Minneapolis May 25, 2020. Millions of people — in multinational, multigender

marches — decried his and other racist police killings.

Last summer, the Capitol Hill Organized Protest took place in Seattle’s LGBTQ2S+ community, with many of its members involved in the strong anti-police, anti-racist and anti-gentrification mobilization there. In the CHOP action, which lasted for over a month, demonstrators occupied a 6-square-block area around the police department’s East Precinct headquarters.

Continuous protests on their very doorsteps overwhelmed the cops and forced them to evacuate the building. This came after the police had used tear gas and other weapons against demonstrators.

On July 4, 2020, Summer Taylor, a nonbinary, anti-racist activist, was run over and killed during a Black Femme March against police violence on nearby Interstate 5 in Seattle. Another demonstrator, Diaz Love, was critically injured. The cops, who were supposed to be preventing traffic from entering the

permitted freeway activity, did not prevent the high-speed vehicle from entering the highway.

Taylor and her anti-racist, pro-LGBTQ2S+ legacy will be long remembered. Ever since her death, Black Lives Matter marchers have organized their own car brigades to surround their demonstrations as they proceed down city streets. The cops usually follow them but stay far behind the protesters.

Seattle PrideFest, which draws several hundred thousand people, will be held virtually. Egan Orion, director of PrideFest, which has big-money corporate sponsors, expressed a desire to move away from police involvement. But the big banks and corporations supporting the event would oppose that.

However, LeFevre stresses, “We can’t trust any officer. Regarding the police, we’re done!”

Source: South Seattle Emerald, May 31. Kathy Durkin contributed to this article.

Proyecto 1619: Educadores progresistas opuestos a legislación reaccionaria

Continúa de la página 12

Si tienen éxito, los profesores de estos estados se verán obligados a enseñar con libros de texto de historia blanqueados que borran las luchas y contribuciones de los pueblos oprimidos a lo largo de la historia de este país. Idaho, Iowa, Oklahoma y Tennessee han aprobado recientemente leyes que limitan severamente las formas en que los profesores pueden discutir el racismo, el sexismo, la homofobia, la inmigración, el clasismo y otros temas que los legisladores de derecha pretenden suprimir.

La enseñanza de la verdadera historia de Estados Unidos

Otra colección de recursos didácticos que está en peligro en estos estados es el Proyecto Educativo Zinn, que se creó con la convicción de que “a través de una mirada más atractiva y más honesta al pasado, podemos ayudar a equipar a los estudiantes -y a todos nosotros- con las herramientas analíticas para dar sentido

y mejorar el mundo actual”. Su sitio web contiene una gran cantidad de planes de lecciones y artículos descargables gratuitamente, que “hacen hincapié en el papel de los trabajadores, las mujeres, la gente de color y los movimientos sociales organizados en la configuración de la historia”. (zinnedproject.org)

En respuesta a los legisladores que trabajan para prohibir sus recursos educativos, el Proyecto Educativo Zinn lanzó un compromiso para que los educadores lo firmen, diciendo que, se apruebe o no la legislación reaccionaria, se niegan a mentir a los estudiantes y seguirán enseñándoles la verdad sobre la historia de Estados Unidos.

El compromiso dice: “Los educadores abajo firmantes no nos dejaremos intimidar. Continuaremos con nuestro compromiso de desarrollar un pensamiento crítico que ayude a los estudiantes a comprender mejor los problemas de nuestra sociedad y a desarrollar soluciones colectivas para esos problemas. Estamos a favor de decir la verdad y de elevar el

poder de la organización y la solidaridad que nos hacen avanzar hacia una sociedad más justa”.

Además, el Zinn Education Project y Black Lives Matter at School están intentando concienciar al público sobre el daño que causará la legislación propuesta, promoviendo encuentros en todo el país organizados por Rethinking Schools y Teaching for Change.

Estos eventos tendrán lugar el 12 de junio en lugares que “simbolizan o reflejan la historia que los profesores tendrían que mentir u omitir si estos proyectos de ley se convierten en ley”. La concienciación pública sobre este tema es actualmente escasa, por lo que se anima a los interesados a elegir un lugar significativo y organizar una concentración, junto con miembros de la comunidad y sindicatos locales.

Leyes como las aprobadas en Idaho, Iowa, Oklahoma y Tennessee obligan, por comisión u omisión, a enseñar a los alumnos una visión reaccionaria de la historia, llena de falsedades e ideas retrógradas.

Todos los estudiantes merecen una educación responsable basada en la verdad y el respeto a la humanidad.

Incluso los acontecimientos históricos más espantosos, repulsivos y controvertidos pueden ser analizados por los jóvenes, si se hace con un uso responsable del diálogo, la reflexión y la comunicación. Los educadores, que se dedican a enseñar la historia de Estados Unidos de forma auténtica sobre el papel que todas las formas de fanatismo y opresión han tenido en el desarrollo del país, piden a quienes están de acuerdo con ellos que se solidaricen con los profesores a los que se les niega el derecho a enseñar la verdad a sus alumnos.

A la ganadora del premio Pulitzer, Nikole Hannah-Jones, le fue negada recientemente la titularidad por el Consejo de Administración de la Universidad de Carolina del Norte. Los miembros conservadores del consejo se opusieron al Proyecto 1619, que ella supervisaba. En él se expone la verdad sobre la historia de la esclavitud en Estados Unidos. □



¡Las Vidas Negras Importan!

La cultura de la intoxicación y la clase trabajadora

WW COMENTARIO

Por Devin Cole y Princess Harmony

La cultura de la intoxicación está formada por las señales y fuerzas sociales que empujan a los trabajadores y a los oprimidos a consumir drogas o alcohol. Toda nuestra sociedad -la sociedad estadounidense- se ha ahogado en esta intoxicación. Ya sea cis o trans, heterosexual o queer, todo el mundo se ve afectado por las fuerzas abrumadoras que nos empujan a usar y abusar de las drogas y el alcohol.

La burguesía depende de que la gente ahogue sus problemas en sustancias para evitar llegar a la conclusión de que sus problemas son el resultado de la burguesía.

Esto es especialmente cierto en la comunidad queer, donde las personas queer tienen de 2 a 4 veces más probabilidades de usar y abusar de sustancias que sus homólogos heterosexuales y cisgénero. Esto sucede debido a las opresiones anti-queer y anti-trans. (tinyurl.com/3h6rpryt)

La incidencia del abuso de drogas y alcohol aumenta en las personas que han sufrido acoso o incidentes violentos anti-queer y anti-trans. Por ejemplo, las personas que han sufrido abusos verbales antitrans en las escuelas tenían un 35% más de probabilidades de abusar de sustancias, y las que sufrieron abusos físicos tenían un 40% más de probabilidades.

La opresión de las personas queer y trans es un factor directo detrás del abuso de drogas en las comunidades queer. Pero las empresas siguen alimentando nuestro abuso de sustancias legales como los productos alcohólicos. Casi todos los grandes eventos del Orgullo en Estados Unidos están patrocinados por empresas de alcohol. A pesar de que los actos del Orgullo de junio deberían ser acogedores para todo el mundo -incluidos los sobrios y los menores de edad-, las empresas que abusan de las sustancias siguen utilizando el Orgullo como un truco de marketing.

Las campañas publicitarias de las

empresas se aprovechan a sabiendas y son extremadamente destructivas para nuestra comunidad. Sin embargo, pocas organizaciones y eventos de la corriente queer denuncian esta publicidad, pensando que los dólares de las empresas garantizan la supervivencia.

El capitalismo arco iris alimenta la cultura de la intoxicación

No es de extrañar que las empresas hayan empezado a renombrarse como “diversas e inclusivas” y a enfatizar que sus productos “son para todos”. Esto se hace para seguir siendo competitivos a la hora de atraer al mayor número de compradores para sus productos en la carrera capitalista del perro come-perro de la obtención de beneficios para las corporaciones y los jefes.

Las empresas han desarrollado un aluvión de anuncios de alcohol dirigidos a la población LGBTQ+. Hay botellas de licor de arco iris, vasos de chupito de arco iris, anuncios de cerveza con parejas de homosexuales... y todo eso.

Esta campaña se intensifica durante el mes del orgullo. En las grandes ciudades, no podrás asistir a un evento importante del Orgullo sin ver anuncios de Bud Light, Absolut u otra compañía de alcohol. En Boston y Chicago, Bud Light es uno de los principales patrocinadores del Orgullo.

En ciudades más pequeñas, es más común asistir a los festivales del Orgullo y encontrarse con camiones de licores, carpas de cerveza y otros anuncios de alcohol. En algunos lugares, hay muchas fiestas del Orgullo que duran toda la noche con cantidades aparentemente interminables de alcohol, así como de drogas ilícitas. Muchos de estos eventos acaban con personas que sufren intoxicación etílica u otros efectos secundarios peligrosos del consumo excesivo de alcohol.

No se puede negar que la embestida publicitaria pone la tentación justo en la cara de muchas personas LGBTQ+ de clase trabajadora que sufren de “estrés de minoría”, es decir, la lucha diaria de ser

discriminado y oprimido.

Existe una correlación directa entre el estrés de la opresión de las personas LGBTQ+ a causa de la discriminación y la deshumanización -así como la falta de recursos para las personas LGBTQ+- y la tendencia a automedicarse mediante el consumo de alcohol y drogas.

Las empresas de bebidas alcohólicas entienden esto y se benefician de la opresión de las personas LGBTQ+, perpetuando la cultura de la intoxicación, creando más problemas de abuso de sustancias en la población LGBTQ+ y embolsándose más dinero. La búsqueda implacable de beneficios por parte de las empresas contribuye directamente al sufrimiento continuado de un grupo oprimido.

El consumo de drogas duras se dispara en la población LGBTQ+

No sólo el alcohol y el alcoholismo son un problema creciente para las personas queer/trans, las drogas duras como la metanfetamina se han convertido en una epidemia de abuso. Estadísticamente, los hombres homosexuales tienen cuatro veces más probabilidades de probar la metanfetamina que los heterosexuales.

Las tasas de adicción en general son alarmantemente altas en la comunidad LGBTQ+, debido al gran peso de la opresión diaria que nos asfixia a todos.

Muchas personas queer/trans entran en una espiral de escapismo inducido



PHOTO: GRANMA

El Centro Nacional de Educación Sexual de Cuba (CENESEX), fundado en 1988, basado en un paradigma socialista y emancipador, reconoce el derecho a la sexualidad como inalienable.

por las drogas, que libera temporalmente a las personas del miedo y la ansiedad de ser juzgadas o maltratadas por una sociedad violenta y heteronormativa.

Los Centros para el Control y la Prevención de Enfermedades han documentado que el consumo de drogas y alcohol conduce estadísticamente a tasas más altas de VIH/SIDA y otras ETS, alimentando la actual epidemia de VIH/SIDA en la comunidad LGBTQ+. Aunque la epidemia no está tan extendida como hace 35 años, esta enfermedad mortal sigue haciendo estragos en las comunidades y personas oprimidas, sobre todo en las mujeres.

Sobriedad y socialismo

La conexión entre la cultura de la intoxicación y la muerte es un círculo vicioso que el capitalismo perpetúa mediante el ataque directo y la cooptación. Por desgracia, esa cooptación está presente en el Orgullo.

Frente a este conflicto permanente, algunos festivales del Orgullo han recurrido al Orgullo sobrio. Esto puede incluir que no se permita ni se venda ningún tipo de alcohol en el recinto, junto con personal de reducción de daños en el lugar, que tiene Narcan para tratar las sobredosis de drogas y proporcionar recursos sobre la sobriedad y el uso seguro de drogas.

Estos eventos del Orgullo y otros eventos LGBTQ+ similares están siendo liderados por una nueva ola de socialistas queer/trans comprometidos con la construcción de una revolución socialista dirigida por personas queer, trans y basada en el cuidado y la solidaridad de la comunidad.

Estos socialistas LGBTQ+ se han dado cuenta de que el capitalismo no traerá la liberación ni la solución a ningún problema, sino que sólo alimentará más caos, más cultura de la intoxicación y dejará más gente oprimida y trabajadores muertos a su paso.

Saben que será el socialismo el que dé el golpe de gracia a la cultura de la intoxicación. □

Proyecto 1619: Educadores progresistas opuestos a legislación reaccionaria

Por Andy Terhune

Los legisladores de derecha de 15 estados están aprobando una legislación que obligará a los profesores de las escuelas públicas a enseñar una narrativa nacionalista de la historia, que ignora la historia genocida, racista, sexista, antiinmigrante y opresiva de Estados Unidos. La legislación específica difiere entre los 15 estados, pero todos comparten el objetivo de prohibir la aplicación de la “teoría racial crítica” en la enseñanza de estudios sociales.

Esto significa que los profesores de Arizona, Arkansas, Idaho, Iowa, Luisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Nuevo Hampshire, Carolina del Norte, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Texas, Utah y Virginia Occidental no podrán -y en algunos casos serán multados- enseñar sobre el

papel del racismo en la conformación del sistema legal y en la creación de disparidades económicas y diferencias de rendimiento. Y no podrán explicar cómo las desigualdades que aún existen hoy en día tienen su origen en un pasado de supremacía blanca.

Los racistas se oponen al Proyecto 1619

Uno de los recursos curriculares a los que se oponen los legisladores conservadores es el Proyecto 1619. Su introducción dice: “El Proyecto 1619 es una iniciativa en curso por la revista The New York Times Magazine que comenzó en agosto de 2019, el 400 aniversario del inicio de la esclavitud estadounidense. Su objetivo es replantear la historia del país colocando las consecuencias de la esclavitud y las contribuciones de los estadounidenses

negros en el centro mismo de nuestra narrativa nacional.” (project1619.org)

La educación tradicional en Estados Unidos enseña a los estudiantes que el nacimiento del país se produjo en 1776. Esta narrativa ignora su formación como colonia de colonos, basada en el robo de tierras y el genocidio de los pueblos indígenas, y los 157 años de esclavitud que construyeron las colonias antes de 1776. Ignora el papel del trato de los esclavos y el carácter del colonialismo de colonos en la independencia política y económica de Gran Bretaña. Los legisladores republicanos están intentando prohibir el proyecto 1619 y otros muchos recursos didácticos fundamentales como éste, en un intento de prohibir una enseñanza honesta y auténtica de la historia de Estados Unidos.



Para Proyecto 1619, Día de Acción, 12 de junio, vaya a zinnedproject.org.

Muchos de estos legisladores no sólo quieren restringir los debates sobre la teoría crítica de la raza, sino que intentan limitar la educación sobre el papel del sexismo, el heterosexismo, la xenofobia y la opresión de clase a lo largo de la historia de Estados Unidos. En Missouri, la legislación propuesta prohibiría a los profesores de las escuelas públicas el uso de cualquier recurso del Proyecto 1619, del programa de estudios Learning for Justice del Southern Poverty Law Center, de Black Lives Matter at School, de Teaching for Change y del Zinn Education Project.

Continúa en la página 11